



Indiana State Department of Health

Epidemiology Resource Center

Quick Facts

About...Enterovirus

What is enterovirus?

Enteroviruses are common viruses that cause 10 to 15 million infections in the United States each year. This is an estimate because enterovirus is not a reportable disease. Most of the time, enteroviruses do not cause serious illness, but the viruses cause disease more frequently in summer and fall.

What are the symptoms of enterovirus?

- low-grade fever
- cough
- runny nose
- sneezing
- skin rash, mouth blisters
- body aches

Infected individuals generally self-recover without incident by treating symptoms. However, occasionally enteroviruses can cause more serious conditions, such as blood infection (sepsis), meningitis, encephalitis, myocarditis, or paralysis.

How is enterovirus spread?

Enterovirus can be found in the respiratory fluids (from the nose and throat) and feces of an infected person. You can become infected by direct contact to secretions of an infected person, or by touching objects or surfaces that have the virus on them then touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.

Who is at risk for getting enterovirus?

Infants, children, and teenagers are most likely to get infected with enteroviruses and become sick. Children with cold-like symptoms that experience difficulty breathing are asked to consult with their healthcare provider for further evaluation.

Also, individuals with weakened immune systems or underlying medical conditions, such as asthma, may experience severe complications and require hospitalization with supportive therapy.

What should I do if I think I have enterovirus?

Contact your health care provider if you have symptoms that are not going away or are getting worse. Lab testing is needed to confirm a diagnosis (stool or respiratory specimen).

How is enterovirus treated?

There is no specific treatment for enterovirus infections. Some over-the-counter medications may be used to treat some symptoms. Contact your healthcare provider for information about medications.

Because this is a virus, antibiotic medications are not an effective treatment.

How is enterovirus prevented?

There are no vaccines for preventing enterovirus. Ways to help reduce the risk of getting infected with viruses:

- Wash hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds, especially after changing diapers or using the toilet.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid kissing, hugging, and sharing cups or eating utensils with people who are sick.
- Cover your cough.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Disinfect frequently touched surfaces, such as toys and doorknobs, especially if someone is sick.

This page was last reviewed July 21, 2015.